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Piety, the True Ornament and Dignity of Woman.

A SERMON

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THE

ANNUAL COMMENCEMENT

OF THE

JUDSON FEMALE INSTITUTE.


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A SERMON.

She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.—PROVERBS IV, 19.

The illustrious donor, whose munificence is here celebrated, is no other than Wisdom. And Wisdom is but the ~~S~~ynonym of Piety—that divine principle, which, infused into the soul, prompts it to love and fear God, and to consecrate its powers to his service.. The design of ~~this~~ ^{the} inspired oracle, here, is to recommend this celestial Wisdom, on the ground of ^{the} superior advantages she confers on her votaries. “She shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.”

The religion of the Bible draws its most solemn and impressive motives from a future life. It was revealed to man in order to prepare him for an endless state, to which the present is a brief preparatory period; to teach him so to live, that when his probation here shall have been ended, he may enter the eternal habitations of the blessed. And, hence, it is not only man's highest duty, but his most vital interest to embrace the religion of the Gospel. To refuse it, were not only to

rebel against God, but to bring upon his own head overwhelming destruction. But Piety not only confers the matchless blessings of eternal life, but bestows the highest temporal rewards, upon those who tread her lovely path. An Apostle assures us, that "Godliness is profitable for the life that now is, and for that which is to come." Our blessed Redeemer encourages us to become his disciples with the unequivocal pledge, that no man who chooseth His service with all its sacrifices shall fail to "receive manifold more in the present time, and, in the world to come, life everlasting."

Thus, in whatever view we contemplate the influence of Piety upon the well-being of its possessor, we shall find it an object worthy of our noblest aspirations. If it brought no present advantages, its eternal rewards should excite our deepest concern, and if the future were a blank, its superior temporal benefits would entitle it to an exalted place in our regard. But since, both in time and eternity, it secures the greatest good for its possessors, no reasonable being can esteem it of trifling value.

Our purpose, on this occasion, is, to present some of the rewards which Wisdom bestows in this life, upon those who choose her "ways of pleasantness." We shall especially recommend this Wisdom, or Piety, to the youthful females of this assembly, and more particularly to the young ladies of the Judson Female Institute.

The connexion in which our text occurs, shows that its language—though penned by Solomon—is but a reproduction of the wholesome counsel he had received, in his youth, from his father David, the royal Psalmist of Isreal. The passage,

indeed, is especially applicable to the young. The imagery which adorns it, is of a nature adapted to attract the attention of youth, while the important truth it conveys commends itself with peculiar impressiveness to those who are in the morning of life.

A brief analysis of the passage before us, will prepare our minds for the theme of our discourse.

“She shall give to their head an ornament of grace.” Head ornaments have been, in all ages, fashionable articles of female attire. Not only are the finest taste and art laid under contribution to arrange the long and profuse hair, which nature has made the glory of woman, but various artificial contrivances are employed to set off the natural charms to advantage. From the richly plaited and pearl-strung tresses of the luxurious East, in ancient times to the modern Oriental *talpock* and turban: from the tawdry plumes and tassels of a rude society, to the aspiring accumulations of a ~~fast~~ generation and even to the elaborate braids and flowing ribbons of the present day, head-dresses have ever been acknowledged to enhance the natural attractiveness of the person. We learn, then, from this portion of the text, that *Piety will render its possessor LOVELY and ATTRACTIVE.*

“A Crown of glory shall she deliver to thee.” The crown is an indispensable accompaniment of royalty. It is the symbol of majesty, of dignity. When, therefore, the sacred oracle foretells the presentation of “a crown of glory,” the obvious interpretation of its utterance is, *Piety will impart dignity to the person and character of its possessor.* As the crowned queen is an object of homage and admiration to her

subjects, so she, whose brow is encircled with the radiant diadem of celestial wisdom, shall command respect and win honor from all within her influence.

We now proceed to commend to you, PIETY, THE TRUE ORNAMENT AND DIGNITY OF WOMAN.

It is no longer a question, whether woman should be educated. It is no longer doubted that she is endowed with an intellect, capable of indefinite expansion and improvement. All admit, that she possesses a mind stamped with the likeness of Deity—"a mind formed of the finest mould and wrought for immortality;" that she has a high and holy mission to fulfil, which requires for success something more than mere superficial adornment; that she is capable of an influence, that demands for its safe direction, the most careful and finished training of her intellectual powers.

Then let her be educated—educated to the extent of her capacity. Let us elevate the present standard. Let our Female Institutions be so endowed, as to afford the amplest facilities for the highest order of mental training. But let us not stop here. In educating her mind, let us not forget her heart. Exclusive culture of the intellect, the moral nature being overlooked, or improperly directed, is to be feared rather than encouraged; it is, in the last degree, perilous to the best interests of the individual and of society. Genius, no matter how brilliant or commanding, if devoid of correct moral principle, Samson-like, will drag ruin upon itself and upon all within its influence—or rather Phaeton-like, aspires to guide the chariot of the Sun, but, in its weakness and infatuation, sets the universe on fire. Intellect is the centri-

fugal force of the moral world, which, unchecked by some gravitating power, rushes onward with the impetuosity and eccentricity of the comet, yet with more disastrous results; but restrained by the central force of religious virtue, like the harmonious play of the planetary spheres, preserves a nice and well adjusted equilibrium. Let but the rising youth of these States be taught to admire only the embellishments of the understanding, to seek for only literary or intellectual pre-eminence, and no care be taken to instill principles of religion—the truths of the Bible—and the schools of learning, which are the appropriate boast of the present day, will prove so many festering ulcers upon the surface of the body politic. The dire scenes of France, during the reign of Terror, would be re-enacted on your happy shores; Peace, Virtue and Happiness would flee from your firesides, with Religion from your altars; a horror of great moral darkness would brood over your land, and your fair domain would be drenched in the blood of brethren. This is no ideal picture. History has shown it to be a terrible reality. Such, the past has proved to be the baleful fruits of mere refinement of manners without moral culture, such the disastrous workings of intellectual education unchecked by the balance-wheel of religious virtue.

If this be true in history, where men are the prominent actors: inasmuch as women are the springs of a most wonderful influence; as they watch over and nourish the first germs of youthful genius, and direct its subsequent growth and developement; as they by a silent witchery, control some of the most important thoughts and actions of men, and thus, indirectly, mould the character of a nation, we have an

overwhelming argument, *a fortiori*, for the religious education of our daughters.

Besides, it has been remarked, that the soul of man is characterized by the supremacy of intellect, while that of woman is marked by the predominance of the moral powers. If this distinction be admitted, how weighty is the responsibility of those to whom her education is entrusted! Then give to her the most finished course of mental training; let her mind be elevated and invigorated by communion with the master-geni of every age, and stored with the richest treasures of science and literature; let her manners be refined by every innocent embellishment of art; but above all, let her soul be taught to reverence the Deity; to delight in communion with the pure, the holy, the spiritual; to find expression in modest exercise of Christian charity—in a word, let her intellectual attainments and personal accomplishments be tempered and chastened by the graces of unaffected Christian piety; and there is no sphere, to which she may lawfully aspire, that she will not adorn and enoble.

A consideration of the effects of piety upon the character will verify the statement of the heavenly oracle, and show that it does “give to the head an ornament of grace.”

1. It elevates the affections. It is to these, that religion addresses its most powerful appeals. It arrests the tendency of the heart to love what is base, sensual and groveling, and teaches it to place its affections upon things above. It purges the breast of low propensities and brutish appetites, and calls into exercise the holiest and purest emotions of the soul. It inculcates, first and supremely, love to God—the source of

all purity and goodness—and second only to that, love to all mankind. It bids us honor parents, cherish kindred, obey laws and do good to men. It lifts our hopes to a glorious world beyond these terrestrial shades, where the redeemed soul shall enjoy serene and perfect bliss; and all along this path of life it urges us to press onward to that goal. With motives, sanctions and hopes like these, can the heart under the influence of piety, become the slave of base desires and appetites? Rather will it not rise superior to the lower regions of sense, and seek the purer air and the holier companionship of spiritual natures?

2. But piety has its effect upon the intellect. The inspired author of the Psalms asserts, that the entrance of God's word into the mind giveth light; that the testimony of the Lord maketh wise the simple. We believe this to be true, even in the lowest or least spiritual sense. We believe the intellect is enobled and strengthened by the inspiration of heavenly Wisdom. We do not assert that piety changes radically the mental constitution, transforming the idiot mind into the far-reaching genius: but by giving a salutary direction to the powers, and, especially, by presenting the purest and most sublime subjects of thought, it developes and expands these powers, for fulfilling the highest ends of their creation. The intellect thus invigorated, under the influence of a heart purified and elevated,—as I have described—will exert itself, for the production of the noblest and most worthy efforts. Its own creations will be characterized by a purity, a truthfulness and a healthy vigor, which cannot fail to charm all lovers of “the true, the beautiful and the good.”

3. Again, Piety inculcates the obligation to aim at "whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report;" and "if there be *any virtue, any praise,*" it bids us love and practise them. Hence Piety has the effect to sweeten the temper, and to promote true refinement of taste, feeling and manner. The eminent Christian woman can never descend to the waspishness and petulance of the shrew, to the coarseness of the Amazon, nor to the imprudence of the romping hoiden. She has no ambition to be classed among the "strong-minded women," who unsex and degrade themselves, by their boisterous assumption of man's prerogatives and responsibilities. But with a cheerful temper, she blends gentle forbearance and a modest dignity of deportment, as free from masculinity, on the one hand, as from childishness and imprudence, on the other. In a word, the truly pious woman, accustomed to the contemplation of the beautiful virtues, recommended by the Apostle, in the passage just quoted, becomes assimilated in feeling and manner to the Scripture models of excellence which she is taught to admire.

Thus is formed a symmetrical and well developed character. With a mind thoroughly cultivated by study, under the guidance of affections purified and elevated by communion with the holy and heavenly, with sweet and gentle dispositions, with refined taste and manners, have we not a combination of all that is lovely and admirable in character? View woman, thus educated and sanctified, in any fitting relation, and her dignity shines in resplendent lustre, winning admiration and exacting homage.

I. Let us regard her, first, in her appropriate dominion, a realm all her own, where she sits enthroned, a queen with more than queenly power; that little world, where purity and innocence, affection and confidence dwell. *Home* is woman's true sphere. For this, the Creator endowed her with those delicate, yet powerful moral instincts, which enable her to wield so irresistible an influence. Here it is, that she stamps the first ineffaceable impression upon the soul, and, as with plastic art, moulds the character of the future man. Here it is, that she gives the first inspiration to the genius of the philosopher, and implants the generous purpose in the heart of the patriot and philanthropist. It is here she teaches the infant heart to love, and the infant tongue to lisp, the name of the great Creator, and communicates the impulse which ripens into the consecration of the Gospel minister.

What a position of honorable influence! And how lovely is she, who, fitted by culture in the school of earthly science, and by grace in the school of celestial Wisdom, has undertaken the noble task! With a mind trained to think, to judge, to direct, to command; with intelligence to devise prudent yet liberal counsels; with a strength of moral principle, which triumphs over the promptings of mere worldly ambition, while it shrinks from no responsibility; and with unshaken faith in the teachings of inspired truth, her power is unlimited for the achievement of the greatest results. There is no station, to which woman may be called, fraught with a more exalted dignity, than that of the educated Christian mother. Not Semiramis, with her absolute power and untold wealth; not Zenobia, with her majestic beauty and heroic energy; not

Elizabeth, with her queenly prestige, her splendid pageants, her masculine talents, her court of brilliant wits and statesmen, may claim the meed of true nobility, which the world accords to the mother of the great Washington. Though not skilled in the learning of the schools, she had acquired by reading and observation a store of valuable knowledge, and her mind was invigorated by a rigid and wholesome system of self-discipline. Her soul was imbued with reverence for God, and kindled with a lively faith in the religion of the Saviour. Thus cultured, thus sanctified, she nursed the years of the youthful Washington, and, together with an ardor for liberty, she instilled that love of country, which is ever the spirit of enlightened Christianity, and inspired that respect for truth, justice, honor and religion, which has made him the first of heroes and statesmen, and rendered the name of the *Pater patriæ* venerable and immortal.

The grace and accomplishments of the Miletan enchantress fascinated the courtly Pericles, and even charmed away from his chosen rugged path, the stern and philosophic Socrates. The conquerors of the world lured by the Egyptian Siren, forgot their ambition and their schemes of conquest, and surrendered themselves willing captives to the chain of profligate beauty. The votaries of learning have ever applauded the extraordinary acquirements of queen Christina, who, amid the care and engagements of government, stored her mind with vast treasures of lore. The lovers of romance are accustomed to extol the sublime enthusiasm, the patriotic ardor, the undaunted courage of Joan of Arc.

But the unrivalled charms of Aspasia and Cleopatra

have not blinded the world to their real merits, associated, as those attractions were, with so much profligacy of manners. Posterity has long ago pronounced judgment upon the character of the celebrated daughter of the great Gustavus, whose profound erudition was allied with so much unwomanish feeling and conduct. We have, long since, ceased to be moved by encomiums upon the patriotism and lofty daring of the intrepid Maid of Orleans. But wherever from the heart of humanity pining under chains, there palpitates forth upon the air a single sigh for freedom; wherever the heel of the tyrant has been raised from the neck of the oppressed; wherever liberal institutions are prized; wherever the influence of our beloved country has been felt in disenthraling, comforting, elevating and christianizing man; there will be loved and honored and revered the pure and sacred name of Mary Washington.

It is in the sanctuary of Home, that woman appears most lovely, and her dignity shines in peerless radiance: as the *Mother*, training her children to love truth and honor, to value integrity, to scorn meanness, to conquer passion, to respect religion and laws, to reverence and worship the Deity; as the *Wife*—not, as Irving remarked, “the mere dependent and ornament of man in prosperity”—but his friend and counsellor, by a congeniality of taste and sentiment sharing his intellectual recreations, his stay and solace in adversity, encircling his years with the halo of love, confidence, sympathy and the resources of a well-stored mind; as the *Matron*, presiding with dignified grace, swaying the sceptre of impartial but gentle authority over the household, enlivening the circle

of her guests with the charms of her refined conversation, and winning all hearts by her modest yet genial hospitality. The influence of such a woman, though she may never appear without the precincts of domestic retirement, is far more blessed and far more truly noble, than the power and renown of the imperial Eugenie. Then for this lofty dignity, how shall the lovely daughters of the land be fitted; but by seeking not only literary but religious instruction; by cultivating that Wisdom which shall set the "ornament of grace," and the "crown of glory" upon the head of the humble disciple of Jesus?

2. But the influence of woman is not restricted to the circumscribed area of domestic life; it is felt throughout the broad and complicated framework of *Society*. The social position of woman in different ages and among different people, forms one of the most curious portions of history. In one place, she is represented as degraded to a level with the beasts of burden; in another consigned to voluptuous apartments of the Harem; now trampled on, and made to feel the bitterest wrongs of human tyranny; anon transformed into a goddess, to win whose smile the brave cavalier would dare the greatest perils. But neither in degradation, nor luxury, neither in bondage, nor as the idol of chivalry does she find her appropriate sphere.

Christianity has solved the problem. The Bible asserts woman's true dignity and determines her proper social rank, when it represents her as man's co-ordinate, his counterpart, necessary to the symmetry, the equilibrium of society. She is not his competitor, not his rival. Her feminine nature is

ill-adapted to contend as man's equal in arms, in the fierce, rude struggles of life. Her office is rather that of guardian angel—or, as the Bible terms it, his “help-meet”—to nerve him in the hour of conflict, to cheer him when the contest is fiercest and the cloud lowers darkest, to support the drooping head, to bind up the broken heart; and when the storm of war has gone, and the sun of prosperity illumines his path, it is her's to walk by his side, and, by the benign influence of her example, her smile, her counsels and her prayers, to soften the asperities of his nature, and win him to rectitude, to happiness and to heaven. It is hers to refine, to elevate and to save.

How beautiful is such a charater, and how morally sublime such a mission! How do we love and honor woman, in this her appropriate sphere. But when she thrusts herself into the dusty hippodrome of manly competition; when she prefers her claim to the rostrum, the senate or the pulpit; when she throws off the veil of modesty so becoming her nature, and appears among the noisy rabble and the vulgar declaimers of the hustings, we turn from the spectacle in ineffable disgust. We must tell her, the Bible forbids it; common sense disallows it; her own feminine instincts must rise in irrepressible revolt against so gratuitous a prostitution of herself. It is a triumphant commentary upon the excellence of our christianity, that the apologists of such an outrage upon the best and purest feelings of the heart, are in general, infidels and blasphemers, who scruple not to trample under foot, the volume of Divine Truth. With a mind cultivated and informed, with a conscience enlightened by celestial Wisdom, with a

heart refined by touches of the Holy Spirit, there can be no fear, that woman will so far forget her obligations to God, her duties to herself and society as thus deliberately to degrade herself.

But an error scarcely less unbecoming, and more fatal, is that of those who regard woman as a butterfly, to flit before the eyes of men, and, by the gorgeous glitter of her wings, dazzle, for a moment, the sight, but leave no good or permanent impression. She was not formed to chatter nonsense with brainless fops, or to amuse the vanity of pedants, who imagine they honor her by condescending to converse with her. And she, whose time and thoughts are engrossed with the details of the toilet, whose whole ambition is to lead in fashion, to shine in the ball-room and to excel in the flippant conversation prevalent there, has no just idea of the noble end for which she was created, and renders herself only disgusting in the eyes even of those she strives so much to captivate. Woman's mission is far more truly great, and her influence should be far more beneficent. Her mission is, by a virtuous and pious example—shedding upon her pathway the lustre of Christian devotion and benevolence, by her intelligent conversation, her pure and refined manner, her omnipotent smile, bestowed only on the deserving, to throw her allpowerful influence into the scale of morals, and thus to purify the tone of society. Woman has a place in society—aye, she has a power; and this when rightly wielded is noiseless as the zephyr, but resistless as the tornado. The poet was right, when he represented the world as a wilderness, and man a sighing hermit, until Woman smiled. But men

will not worship a picture; they will not yield homage to a statue, though of the most exquisite mould and delicate workmanship. Personal attractions may ravish, for a moment, but they cannot bind the captive. To secure a permanent influence, the mind must be cultivated, and to render that influence beneficent, every power and every accomplishment must be chastened by the spirit of Christian piety. With this ornament, woman will always be loved and admired—though her charms of form and feature be few; so true it is, that Piety imparts loveliness and dignity to its possessor.

And yet, it is a lamentable truth, that puissant as is the sway of Woman in society, her influence is often perverted. Especially in the fashionable circles of our cities, there is exerted an influence most pernicious to morals, by many, whose wealth and accomplishments give them a commanding position. Their corrupt manners, their sneers at religion, their smiles lavished chiefly upon the foppish, the intemperate, the dissolute, all tend to bring morals into contempt and to degrade the tone of society. How many an inebriate, perhaps, encountered his first temptation in the richly furnished drawing-room, where the wine-cup sparkled in the hands of the fair, whose intoxicating charms made him an easy captive to the fatally intoxicating liquid! How many a susceptible youth has been lured into the dangerous maelstrom of gaming, by the card table of fashion, where beautiful and accomplished ladies set the baneful example! I verily believe that a universal frown from the sex, upon these ruinous vices of intemperance and gambling, would be more effectual to banish them from the land, than all the efforts of benevolent associations, aided by the

strong arm of the law. There can be no doubt, that one of the most potent instrumentalities for the abatement of social vices, and the expurgation of society is the Christian education of our daughters.

Then let us properly fit them for this field of lofty enterprise. Let us so train them, that they will be "refined and pure in manners, their minds stored with useful knowledge, their imaginations regulated, capable of appreciating the wonders of nature, and the rich treasures of science and literature, with hearts softened by piety and minds purified by religious knowledge." Thus disciplined, though she may not preside at the helm of State, it will be Woman's nobler task to direct, like the mild and radiant pole-star, the course of the daring voyager; though she may not enjoy the elective franchise, she may exercise the greater power of silently influencing the suffrage of electors, for the elevation of only the trustworthy and the morally noble; though she may not ascend the pulpit, nor assume to be the religious guide of the age, she may, in the Church, by a modest Christian conversation and charity, sustain her part as one of "the lights of the world." While the frivolous maiden is listening to the compliments with which heartless flatterers regale her ear; while the woman of fashion and of the world showers her favors on worthless sycophants, or poisons the minds of virtuous youth; while the flippant gossip is retailing small-talk and circulating slander; the cultivated Christian lady, in the exercise of her retiring ministry, is purifying, humanizing and elevating society. If a position is dignified in proportion to its influence and usefulness, there is no office more worthy of admiration and profound

respect, than that of educated, sanctified Woman in society.

What though her ministry be quiet and unobtrusive; what though she be not constantly exposed to the gaze of the great rude world, and her name be not borne upon the breath of the noisy rabble; her power is not the less felt, her dignity is not the less exalted. The analogies of nature prove, that those causes in the physical world, which produce the greatest results, are the most noiseless and imperceptible in their operation. The traveler on the banks of the Nile, views with admiration those imposing pyramids, which lifting their lofty summits in the desert, proclaim at once man's greatness and his insignificance. And yet, how trifling appear these vast structures, monuments of human power and skill, beside those immense continents which have been silently reared in the ocean by the almost invisible coral. The colossal mountains, which here and there lift up their granite piles towards heaven, were upheaved by some sudden and terrific convulsion from the fiery heart of our planet. And yet, grand and imposing as they are, they are utterly insignificant in extent and utility, compared with the boundless areas of sedimentary rocks that cover the earth, and which were formed by a silent and invisible process, far down beneath deep waters. Who would compare the thundering mountain cataract, or even the rushing torrent of Niagara, with its ever-deafening roar, with that unseen influence which binds the myriad worlds of God's Universe in eternal order? If Woman's influence is not conspicuously wielded, it is no less mighty, and therefore, so far from promoting discontent or fostering indolence, the realization of this her silent power should stimulate her to duty,

while it enhances her loveliness and dignity. We would not subtract an iota from the well-earned fame of Florence Nightingale, who braved difficulties and perils of a distant military camp, to relieve and soothe the sufferings of her gallant compatriots: but we submit, that the conduct of our countrywoman, Annie Andrews, was more heroic and more in keeping with her feminine nature, who quietly and alone, undertook a journey to a distant city, where in a fearfully infected atmosphere, she devoted herself night and day, to the task of mitigating the sufferings of the afflicted and ministering consolation to the dying.

3. But the loveliness and dignity of Woman appear, when we consider her in another most interesting relation—in a sphere to which she not only possesses an indefeasible title, but in which she may put forth a potent agency for good. It is the field of *Literature*.

The present age has become truly the era of Female Authorship—of *litteratæ*, if we may modify a term. The press teems, and the reading world is deluged with the productions of female writers, in every department of literature. And it cannot be denied that they have rendered essential service to the cause of truth and virtue. We cordially adopt the sentiment of the late John Wilson that “Woman’s genius loves to image forth what is good, that this is the blessing of her life, its greatest power, its brightest glory.” And it is only in the absence of that Piety which tempers the genius, and throws so soft a radiance upon all her efforts, that she ever appears unlovely and disgusting.

We love to see her imagination, regulated by Piety,

employed for the diffusion of truth and the elevation of her race. The fancy is "a vision and faculty divine," and when chastened by religion is like a prism, which pure and transparent, instead of distorting the sun's rays, but reveals their gorgeous and latent beauties in the varied and lovely tints of the spectrum. The sanctified imagination presents truth, which naked might dazzle and drive away, by its too garish beams, transformed into the most beautiful rainbow hues.

But we would not do woman the injustice to deny to her the possession of the more solid faculties of the mind, nor would we restrict her efforts to the region of fancy. She has reasoning powers, which may be exercised for great and good purposes. Then let them be developed and strengthened and sanctified. The world needs her aid. We consider her no less a necessity in this sphere, than in the others. When we reflect that the general diffusion of education, the multiplication of writers and readers, are rendering the press a most formidable engine of moral power; and when we see the countless poisonous streams emanating from it, in the form of vicious novels and infidel essays, that go out to undermine virtue and pollute society, the imperative obligation is felt to train the rising youth of the land not only to stand proof against their evil influence, but to counteract it by themselves assuming the defence of religion and morality. Let us furnish our daughters, who, without compromising any of that delicacy so dear to woman, may enter this field, with weapons drawn from the armory of the Gospel. Many noble females have entered the list of religious literature and have worn its laurels. They consecrate their talents to the cause of God

and humanity, and while they have won a place on the roll of earthly fame, their noblest reward is, their "names are written in heaven" and "their works do follow them."

These thoughts conspire, with the interesting scenes and circumstances that surround me, to suggest a name, which combines in itself all that is beautiful in virtue, noble in devotion, heroic in action and suffering, brilliant in genius and dignified in character. Around this name, so redolent with the fragrance of great deeds and sweet virtues, there cluster the holiest memories. These memories can never fade; but in the breasts of thousands in this happy land, and among the spicy groves of India and among the saved in heaven, they will ever be sacredly cherished. That name has fired the holy zeal of many a noble spirit to consecrate its powers to the welfare of souls, and will continue to inspire the devotion and courage of the self-sacrificing and benevolent,

"Till the Boodh shall fall, and Burmah's sons
Shall own Messiah's sway."

It is dear to you, my Christian brethren, and to you my young friends, and to many far away, who have received the benefits of the noble Institution which bears this honored name.

It has been adorned by three celebrated missionary heroines each one of whom, though possessed of striking individuality, might form the most lovely model of female excellence.—Which shall we present, for your special imitation? If you seek one, who concentrates the attributes of genius with that greatness of soul which acts and suffers and overcomes all obstacles for the good of her race, we shall point you to

ANN HASSELTINE JUDSON, the first of the illustrious trio, the first of American female missionaries. If you look for quiet and modest worth, devotion to her husband and children, zeal in the greatest of causes, combined with unpretending yet eminent literary abilities, we shall find them to centre in SARAH B. JUDSON, the second wife of the world-renown missionary. If we require the most amiable virtues of a wife and of a woman and the sweet graces of a Christian, blended in harmony with a bright poetic fancy and refined taste, we shall realize our desire in the person of the late EMILY C. JUDSON, known to literary circles under the euphonious *nomme de plume* of Fanny Forrester.

With the merits of this writer, we are tempted to compare those of a recent popular authoress, who is suggested not less by the striking anthithesis in their characters than by the similarity of their pseudonyms. We refer to Fanny Fern. Gifted with a peculiarly versatile genius, now flashing with wit, now gleaming with sarcasm, anon melting into pathos, this writer is capable of short and brilliant excursions, but with not sufficient strength of wing to soar to distant heights.—With her peculiar qualities of style, she has succeeded in captivating many young, inexperienced readers; but the influence of her works is pernicious in the extreme, to those who are not penetrated with a thorough disgust. The absorbing themes with her, are the tyranny of fathers and mothers and the infidelities of men. How an educated woman could so heartlessly expose to public scorn the character of an aged parent, and the experience of her own unhappy marriage, is an enigma to be explained, only by the absence of religious principle.

She has never cultivated true Piety, and therefore, she wears no lovely ornament, no crown of glory.

How nobly contrasts with this, the character of Fanny Forrester. Both women of mental culture and superior accomplishments, the one was a gay and heartless flirt; the other a high-toned, dignified and devoted Christian. The one is known as wielding a pen now gleaming with the keen point of biting satire, now dropping tenderness as honey, anon overspreading her pages with the most gorgeous *couleur de rose*; the other, charming and warming the heart, by the hues of her chastened imagination, infusing the spirit of devotion by delicious strains of poetic melody, and elevating the heart, by the Christian loveliness reflected from her pages. The one has devoted her brilliant talents to the aspersion of her venerable father, insulting his gray hairs by a heartless exhibition of human frailty, and bringing reproach upon herself, by peevish allusions to the unfaithfulness of men. The other manifested her filial devotion, by one of the most touching poems in our language, and sacrificed the bloom of womanhood in the abodes of heathenism, to share the pious toils of the husband she dearly loved. No one can peruse a dozen pages of Fanny Fern, and allow himself to be affected by her spirit, without becoming more or less misanthropic. And no one can rise from the perusal of Mrs. Judson's writings without an exalted opinion of humanity, and without being himself a better man.

The career of the former was like the meteor, brilliant but brief and going out suddenly in the darkness; that of the other like the softer but more durable stellar light, which shines to brighten and bless our pathway through life.

[We have thus endeavored to exhibit to you the superior loveliness and dignity of educated sanctified woman, in her relations to the home-circle, to Society and to Literature. The three wives of the great moral hero, whose name your beloved Institution bears, are beautiful exemplifications of well-developed character, in each of these spheres. Who would not prefer a position like theirs, to that of the most fascinating belle, or the most exalted queen?]

You have heard, my young friends, of the extraordinary power, with which the Creator has endowed your sex. You have heard, how that influence may be exerted for the highest good of mankind, and how it may be prostituted to purposes, which shall result in individual and social disaster. You enjoy, in this Institution, peculiar advantages for that kind and degree of intellectual culture, which shall prepare you for the responsible spheres, to which you may be called in life. By improving every advantage of mental developement here afforded, you will prepare yourselves for an almost boundless career of empire. Then embrace with ardor your golden privileges: store your minds with the priceless treasures of knowledge: labor to secure the proportionate developement of the faculties, God has given you: but above all, seek this Wisdom we have recommended to day; for "she shall give to thine head an ornament of grace; a crown of glory shall she deliver to the." Learn to sit meekly, like Mary of Bethany, at the feet of your Saviour, and learn from the lips of the great Teacher of Righteousness, that most excellent of all Sciences, the plan of salvation. Then will your sway be as happy as it will be boundless, and you will enjoy a dignity far

transcending that of thrones and sceptres. Study to imbue your minds with the spirit of the Bible,

“The spotless mirror of the mind of God,”

that whether your ministry be exercised within the retired walks of Home-life, or you be called upon to act more conspicuous parts in society, or your brows be wreathed with the fadeless laurel, you may diffuse around you, that genial influence, which marks the true loveliness and dignity of educated, sanctified Woman.

We might urge this valuable possession of Wisdom, by other considerations of present advantage. We might show that, in the language of a sweet female poet,

“Not Ophir’s gold
Nor Ethiopia’s gems can match her price;
And like the oil Elisha’s bounty blessed,
She is a treasure, which doth grow by use,
And multiply by spending. She contains
Within herself the sum of excellence.”

But let us, in one word, excite your ambition for those higher rewards, that Wisdom secures, when this world shall have passed away. “’Tis not the whole of life to life live;” and beyond these earthly scenes, there is life above, where God’s eternal presence is known and felt, “at whose right hand there is fullness of joy and pleasures forevermore.” Would you reach those sunny heights of bliss? Would you be forever with God and the angels and the spirits of the just made perfect? Would you all be beautiful as seraphs, and wear crowns of imperishable glory, like the angels? Oh then, seek and obtain this Wisdom—an interest in Christ, a spirit of consecration to his service; and you shall “shine as the stars forever and ever.”

